

Strategic Goal 4

Contribute to the public health, socioeconomic well being and history of the Nation

Objective 4.1

Advance VA medical research and development programs to better address the needs of the veteran population and to contribute to the Nation's knowledge of disease and disability

Objective 4.2

Ensure an appropriate supply of health care providers for veterans and the Nation through sustained partnerships with the medical education community



**Contribute to
the public
health...**

Objective 4.3

Improve the Nation's response in the event of a national emergency or natural disaster by providing timely and effective contingency medical support and other services

Objective 4.4

Enhance the socioeconomic well being of the Nation through veterans benefits and business assistance programs

Objective 4.5

Ensure that national cemeteries are maintained as shrines dedicated to preserving our Nation's history, nurturing patriotism, and honoring the service and sacrifice veterans have made

VA will support the public health of the Nation as a whole through medical research, medical education and training, and serving as a resource in the event of a national emergency or natural disaster; VA will support the socioeconomic well-being of the Nation through the provision of education, vocational rehabilitation, and home loan programs; and VA will preserve the memory and sense of patriotism of the Nation by maintaining our national cemeteries as national shrines and hosting patriotic and commemorative ceremonies and events.

Strategic Goal 4

Contribute to the public health, socioeconomic well being and history of the Nation

Purpose and Outcomes:

The purpose of this objective is to advance medical research and development programs in ways that support veterans needs and contribute to the Nation's medical and scientific knowledge base as a public good. VA will pursue medical research areas that most directly address the diseases and conditions that affect veterans. VA research will also serve as a public good by providing benefits to the Nation as a whole in improving medical knowledge of disease and disability.

Strategies and Processes:

Build Healthy Communities

VA will increase the proportion of medical research projects that are demonstrably related to the health care of veterans or to other Departmental missions. Projects with VA

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Advance VA medical research and development programs to better address the needs of the veteran population and to contribute to the Nation's knowledge of disease and disability*

health care relevance will be selected purposefully for funding before projects with no demonstrable relevance.

External Factors:

Among the external influences that may affect the future direction of the Research and Development Program are the Congress and advisory committees.

In recent years, Congress has consistently demonstrated its support for adequate VA research funding and has taken specific actions to substantially augment VA's appropriations account for research. We expect Congress to maintain that degree of attention by continuing its fiscal support for VA research and by devoting more oversight scrutiny to how VA is spending research dollars.

Performance Measures

	Objective 4.1 Outcome Measures	FY 2006 PerformanceTargets
Researchó	Percent of Institutional Review Board compliance with National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) accreditation and maintenance of Association for the Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AALC) or Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NCR) accreditation or certification where necessary.	100%

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Purpose and Outcomes:

VA will form partnerships with the Nation's medical community to provide training and education through residency programs for physicians and other health care providers.

Strategies and Processes:

Build Healthy Communities

Based on the recommendations of the Residency Realignment Review Committee, VA will shift 1,000 specialty resident positions; 750 will be filled as primary care positions and 250 positions will be eliminated. The latter is in keeping with the larger national goal of

*Objective 4.2
Ensure an appropriate supply of health care providers for veterans and the Nation through sustained partnerships with the medical education community*

training fewer physicians. In addition, VA is working to ensure that medical residents and other students rotating through its clinical programs are part of a modern health care system.

External Factors:

Changes in VA's academic training programs will be affected by its ability to remain a desirable academic training partner. The

future of American medicine, and of VA medicine as well, is shaped by scientific, social, and economic trends that operate virtually independent of the VA health care system.

Performance Measures

Objective 4.2 Outcome Measures		FY 2006 Performance Targets
Resident's Training	Percent of physician medical residents and other trainees who will rate their VA health care educational experience as comparable or superior to other clinical educational training	TBD (by 11/30/00)

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Purpose and Outcomes:

The purpose of this objective is to improve the Nation's ability to respond in the event of a national emergency or a natural disaster by relying on, and coordinating the use of VA's medical support and other services. VA provides medical backup to Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and DoD in the event of a national security emergency, and medical and other support during federal disaster response. VA also provides for contingencies within VA to ensure continued service to veterans.

Strategies and Processes:

VA will develop plans and maintain readiness as required by Public Law 97-174 and implement a Memorandum of Understanding between VA and DoD which requires joint plans and procedures for using the VA medical system as the primary backup to DoD during war and other national emergencies. The National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) Federal Coordinating Center Guide identifies planning and conducting local NDMS area exercises as Federal Coordinating Center

Objective 4.3
Improve the Nation's response in the event of a national emergency or natural disaster by providing timely and effective contingency medical support and other services

responsibilities.

VA will carry out a comprehensive Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan that includes requirements for:

- annual tests, training, and exercises;
- preparation of an alternate operating facility; and
- identification of designated emergency planners within all VA organizations.

The COOP plan will be designed to enable VA to respond to a wide range of potential emergencies:

- an attack on the United States;
- natural, environmental and technological disasters;
- civil disorders; or
- terrorism.

External Factors:

The necessity for a VA response in relation to this particular objective is totally dictated by external factors related to the above national emergencies.

Performance Measures

Objective 4.3 Outcome Measures		FY 2006 Performance Targets
Emergency Preparedness 6	Percent of VA-managed Federal Coordinating Centers which complete at least one NDMS casualty reception exercise every three years	100%

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Contribute to the public health, socioeconomic well being and history of the Nation

Purpose and Outcomes:

The purpose of this objective is to fully utilize veterans' benefits and other business assistance programs to enhance the socioeconomic well being of the Nation and its veterans.

Strategies and Processes:

The array of benefits and services provided by VA has a direct impact on the lives of veterans and beneficiaries. Each benefit program has specific outcomes used to assess program results. However, VA benefit programs also contribute to the socioeconomic well being of the Nation. For example, a disabled veteran completing the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program or a veteran who uses Montgomery GI education benefits can be expected to achieve a higher lifetime income than those who do not participate in the program. The Loan Guaranty Program enables veterans to purchase housing that impacts positively on national economy. The delivery of health care benefits and service has a positive impact on the overall well being of the Nation and can facilitate longer, more productive lives for veterans.

The strategies portrayed in the objectives under Strategic Goals 1 through 3 also support this objective of contributing to the socioeconomic well being of the Nation through contributions to Gross Domestic Product, social and economic status of veterans and their families, and health care of veterans and the Nation.

*Objective 4.4
Enhance the socioeconomic well being of the Nation through veterans benefits and business assistance programs*

VA will ensure compliance with the Small Business Act, as amended, requiring each Department to establish with the Small Business Administration (SBA), on a yearly basis, procurement goals for prime contract and subcontract awards to small businesses, small disadvantaged businesses, small women-owned businesses, 8(a)

concerns, HUB Zone concerns, and service disabled veterans. Goals will be established in a timely manner at a level which meets or exceeds statutory minimums.

Crosscutting Strategies:

Public Laws 105-135 and 106-150 require VA to cooperate and support SBA and the Department of Labor efforts to develop programs to assist veterans, with a focus on service-disabled veterans to establish and maintain small businesses. VA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) will serve as liaison with SBA and DoL to implement these laws. VA plans to develop an expanded business assistance program for veteran-owned small businesses.

VA will also continue to provide accurate and timely information to small business on how, what, when, and where VA purchases goods and services. This will be done through print and electronic formats. VA will also participate in procurement conferences and sessions to train small businesses on VA's acquisition

process and systems. VA will continue to train VA personnel on the Department's responsibilities to support small business through VA's acquisition program.

External Factors:

VA's small business goals are affected by government-wide acquisition reform efforts and are dependent upon effective interagency communication and collaboration.

Performance Measures

Objective 4.4 Outcome Measures		FY 2006 Performance Targets
Small Business Procurement Goals 6	Percent of procurement achieved for each small business category	Small Businesses - 23% Small Disadvantaged Businesses - 5% Women-owned Businesses - 5% HUBZone Concerns - 3% Service-Disabled Veterans - 3%
Home Ownership 6	Veterans rate vs. general population rate	Veteran home ownership rate will be 12% higher than the general population

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Purpose and Outcomes:

The purpose of this objective is to preserve our Nation's history, nurture patriotism, and honor the service and sacrifice of our Nation's veterans by maintaining our national cemeteries as national shrines. VA will strive to maintain the appearance of national cemeteries as national shrines, so that bereaved family members are comforted when they come to the cemetery for the interment or later to visit the grave(s) of their loved one(s).

Strategies and Processes:

To achieve this objective, VA must maintain occupied graves and developed acres in a manner befitting national shrines. Improvements in the appearance of burial grounds and historic structures are also required for VA to fulfill its national shrine commitment. Extensive renovation of grounds, gravesites and grave-markers will be undertaken at cemeteries where long-standing deferred maintenance needs exist. Renovations to historic structures at 59 national cemeteries that were developed during the Civil War era are also planned.

VA will continue its partnerships with various civic organizations that allow volunteers to participate in maintaining the appearance of national cemeteries.

Under a joint venture with VA health care facilities, national cemeteries will continue to provide the therapeutic work opportunities to veterans

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Ensure that National Cemeteries are maintained as shrines dedicated to preserving our Nation's history, nurturing patriotism, and honoring the service and sacrifice veterans have made*

receiving treatment in the Compensated Work Therapy/Veterans Industries (CWT/VI) program.

VA obtains feedback from the families of individuals who are interred in national cemeteries and of other visitors to measure how the public perceives the appearance of the cemeteries. Information obtained from Visitor Comment Cards is analyzed to ensure that VA addresses those

issues most important to its customers.

All national cemeteries are important locations for patriotic and commemorative events. VA will continue to host ceremonies and memorial services at national cemeteries to honor those who made the supreme sacrifice. To preserve our Nation's history, VA will continue to conduct educational tours and programs for schools and civic groups.

External Factors:

Maintaining the grounds, graves and grave-markers of national cemeteries as national shrines is influenced by many different factors. As time goes by, cemeteries experience a variety of environmental changes that may require extensive maintenance. Extremes in weather, such as excessive rain or drought, can result in or exacerbate sunken graves, sunken markers, soiled markers, inferior turf cover, and weathering of columbaria.

Performance Measures

Objective 4.5 Outcome Measures	FY 2006 Performance Targets
National Shrine Commitment 6 Percent of respondents who rate national cemetery appearance as excellent	100%